DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 290 158 CS 211 019

AUTHOR	Upton, James
TITLE	Beyond Correctness: Context Based Response from the Writing Center.
PUB DATE	[87]
NOTE	23p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Secondary Education; Teaching Methods; Writing Evaluation; *Writing Exercises; *Writing Instruction; *Writing Laboratories; Writing Skills; Written Language
IDENTIFIERS	Writing Coaches; *Writing Contexts; Writing Development; Writing To Learn

ABSTRACT

In order for students to be helped effectively to complete their writings successfully, writing centers in schools need to become more adept at "context based response." That is, writing centers need to focus not just on clarity and correctness of writing but also on the content of the assignment that students are working on. This type of response demands much of the writing center personnel, especially of student tutors, but providing such a response greatly increases the value of the writing center services, helps to promote the use of writing-as-learning activities, and improves the quality of student writing and learning. (Copies of several writing assignment worksheets and a reader evaluation sheet, as well as guidelines and suggested uses for these, are appended. Suggestions for the use of these exercises by student tutors are also included.) (JK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

The Write Place

ED290158

BEYOND CORRECTNESS:

CONTEXT BASED RESPONSE FROM THE WRITING CENTER

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

James Upton

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

James Upton
Burlington Community High School
421 Terrace Drive
Burlington, Iowa 52601

CS211017

Writing centers have become a integral component in many schools, and the important services which writing centers offer continue to increase and improve. Many of us who work in the writing center have become increasingly aware of the need to more effectively help our student clients make their writings, especially their writings in content areas, more than clear and correct; we must better assist them to successfully complete the content requirements as well as the structural and writing skills requirements of the assignment. We must develop ways to become more effective as what is often called "context based response." Such type of response demands much of the writing center personnel, expecially of student tutors, but providing such response greatly increases the value of the writing center services, helps to promote the use of writing-as-learning activities, and improves the quality of student writing and learning.

Although the attached materials were originally developed for use in our language arts/writing and our writing-as-learning activities, they have been successfully adapted to provide at least one method of "context based response" from our writing center. The guidelines and suggested uses for the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" are included; however, observations and suggestions for the use of these in the writing center and with student tutors follow.

a. Asking student tutors (or any tutor) to provide any type of "context based response" is most demanding and difficult. "Context based response" demands

that the tutor assume the role of the assigning and evaluating instructor in order to provide the most effective content as well as structural and "writing" suggestions. Tutors, especially student tutors, need not be any type of content expert, but they must be self-confident, competent, and well trained.

b. Becoming an effective tutor who provides "context based response," like becoming an effective writer and thinker, is an acquired skill, and the tutor needs a clear understanding of writing and writing response theory, the theory of "context based response" (specifically the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" and the oral "Praise-Ouestion-Polish" technique), and most importantly extensive guided practice/role playing with these methods as both a writer and a tutor.

Potential student tutors will hopefully have had experience with the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and the "Reader Evaluation Sheet"/"P-Q-P" as student writers in the classroom and perhaps as clients in the writing center, but whether they have or not, potential student tutors need much practice and work with the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and the "Reader Evaluation Sheet"/"P-Q-P" techniques in tutor training workshops.

During tutor training, the use of a wide variety of actual assignments from classes, previously completed "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and "Reader Evaluation Sheets," successfully completed actual assignments, and video tapes of teachers giving assignments are excellent methods to provide practice and prompt discussion with and about "context based response." Again, it is important that students have these experiences as both a "writer" and as a tutor, and role playing and script writing are effective training methods.

c. Just as all student tutors are not expected to be writing "experts," the student tutors who utilize "context based response" are not expected to be content area "experts" in order to provide meaningful responses to the works of others, and it is crucial to emphasize this again and again to student tutors. We teach our tutors that the key to "context based response" lies in engaging the writer in a discussion of the ideas he/she has written on the "ASSIGNMENT," "AUDIENCE," "INTENTION," "LENGTH REQUIRED," "EVALUATIVE CRITERIA," and most importantly, the "AFTER PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES AND THINKING, WHAT ARE THE MAJOR IDEAS I WANT TO SHARE IN THIS PAPER?" on the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and his/her completion of the top section of the "Reader Evaluation Sheet." We make clear to tutors that they can do no more than to try to understand the assignment clearly and to ask questions and make suggestions honestly. Ironically, this "non-expert" response is often most effective in improving the quality of content; the responses, questions, and suggestions from the "non-expert" tutors often seem to encourage the writer to re-examine and revise the paper to make sure it is clear and specific.

d. During the year, we ask all teachers to provide a copy of the major writing assignments they give, and we ask them to include the grading criteria, suggestions for successful completion of the paper, etc.. A copy of our "Writing As Learning Activity Worksheet" is attached, and we ask that instructors provide a copy of pages 1 and 2 of the "Worksheet." We keep these on file in the writing center as a reference for tutors.

We always stress to tutors that they are to be "sure" that both they and the student clients clearly understand the assignment. We insist that tutors

contact one of the professional staff members if they or the clients are not sure if the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and top section of the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" are not completed accurately. If there is doubt, a conference to discuss the assignment is held with the assigning teacher and the writing center personnel.

e. As with all work and skills done by tutors in the writing center, tutor work in providing "context based response" is an on-going learning process, and we include discussions/assessment/modifications of our efforts at such response in our regular staff-tutor meetings. We also conduct extensive follow-up evaluation-assessment of our "context based response" efforts by asking clients and instructors to complete evaluation questionnaires about our efforts.

Again, the use of "context based response" services is a major addition to the training and work of writing center tutors, and not all tutors will be effective at providing such responses. However, such response services greatly increases the value of the writing center and encourages more instructors to utilize writing in their classes since they know that students can receive assistance from others and they as instructors will not be solely responsible for providing assistance with such assignments.

We encourage those who may utilize these materials to contact us if they have questions and/or to share new uses for these which they may develop.

The Write Place

TO: BCHS Staff
FROM: "The Write Place"
SUB: "Writing As Learning Activity Worksheet" Information

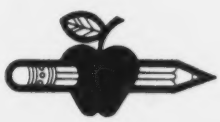
The attached "Writing As Learning Activity Worksheet" was developed for those who wish to explore/develop writing-as-learning activities in their classes (although many of us in language arts now utilize the "Worksheet" for all major assignments). Most of the "Writing As Learning Activity Worksheet" is self-explanatory, and information regarding the uses of the "Worksheet" and the related student "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and "Reader Evaluation Sheet" is available in "The Write Place."

We encourage you to utilize writing as learning in your classes, and we hope you will use the "Worksheet." "The Write Place" personnel will be happy to discuss the "Worksheet" with you and will be happy to work with your students.

We would ask that you provide "The Write Place" a copy of pages 1 and 2 of the "Worksheet" when you make an assignment, and we will keep the copy in "The Write Place" for reference. At the conclusion of the assignment, we would also like a copy of the completed "Worksheet" to keep on file and to share with others.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please contact us if we can be of assistance in any way.

BURLINGTON COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL



421 Terrace Drive
Burlington, Iowa 52601

APPENDIX A

"Writing As Learning" Activity Worksheet

Complete all sections as specifically as possible. Students must be aware of the sections B - F; however, sharing the entire worksheet is probably most effective.

A. SUBJECT:

INSTRUCTOR:

DATE OF PRESENTATION:

B. BACKGROUND MATERIAL NEEDED:

TEXT: PAGES:

OTHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL NEEDED: SOURCE (library, interviews, etc.):

POSSIBLE TIE INTO PREVIOUS LESSONS/ACTIVITIES:

C. SPECIFIC CONTENT OBJECTIVES:

D. WRITING ASSIGNMENT(S):

FORM(S): LENGTH:

SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT(S):

CHOICES OR OPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS:

CREATE OWN ASSIGNMENT OPTION:

INDIVIDUAL OR/AND GROUP PROJECT:

DUE DATE:

CLASS TIME FOR WORK: WHEN:

E. EVALUATION/GRADING CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNMENT(S):

GRADED OR PASS/FAIL:

SPECIFIC CRITERIA:

(suggest including "Demonstrate acceptable use of Standard Written English)

F. POSSIBLE CLASS PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES:

SAMPLES TO DISCUSS:

COMPLETE SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT(S) AS CLASS:

G. WRITING PROCESS INVOLVEMENT:

TIME FOR GROUP WORK/INTER-ACTION:

TIME FOR TEACHER-STUDENT CONFERENCES:

(Encourage use of the "Writing Activity Worksheet" and the "Reader Evaluation Sheet"/"Praise-Question-Polish" technique throughout the completion of the assignment)

H. INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION/FOLLOW-UP OF THE ACTIVITY

QUALITY OF STUDENT PAPERS:

GENERAL STUDENT REACTION TO ASSIGNMENT (BIGGEST PROBLEMS/CONCERNS):

SHARE REACTION WITH CLASS:

SHARE SAMPLES OF PAPERS (ORALLY/REPRODUCE/POST):

I. POSSIBLE REVISION/IMPROVEMENT IN ASSIGNMENT:

POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

Save this sheet: share with others.

BURLINGTON COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

421 Terrace Drive
BURLINGTON, IOWA 52601
(319) 753-2211

Principal
JACK L. WEHRLE, Ext. 16

Associate Principals
JERALD E. PARKS, Ext. 19
FRANCES L. DISSELHORST, Ed. D., Ext. 18

"WRITING ASSIGNMENT WORKSHEET" and "READER EVALUATION SHEET:"

WORKSHEETS FOR WRITING/THINKING IMPROVEMENT

James Upton
Burlington Community High School
421 Terrace Drive
Burlington, Iowa 52601

The "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" were originally developed for use in writing and literature classes, but these have since been successfully adapted for use in writing-as-learning activities and for use in the writing center. Regardless of the use of these worksheets, the underlying beliefs of these need to be made clear:

a. Writing is important and valuable as both a means of discovery/learning and as a means of communication. Writing assignments and responses to writing should help students understand and make intelligent judgments about the content of their writing and help them improve the quality of their written presentation of their content.

b. The more a writer thinks about, talks about, and writes about the content and the structural requirements of an assignment, the more effective the final written product will be.

c. Effective writing and critical thinking are acquired skills, and students need consistent positive practice and reinforcement to develop these skills.

d. Responses to and suggestions about a paper during its development are more effective and valuable than are responses to and suggestions about a "completed" draft.

e. Writing is more effective and enjoyable as a "group activity." Writers should seek a variety of responses to their works throughout the writing process and should be willing to provide responses to the works of others.

FROM: James Upton, Burlington Community High School
SUB: "Writing Assignment Worksheet;" Writing About Writing

The "Writing Assignment Worksheet" is the student version of the instructor's "Writing As Learning Activity Worksheet." Many times students do not do well on writing assignments because they do not fully understand the assignment, the content, and/or how to utilize the writing process. As the wording of the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" suggests, it is designed to help students better understand each specific assignment and the writing process and improve their critical thinking skills by having them think about, write about, and talk about the specific assignment and content BEFORE they actual write the paper.

With early assignments, it is effective to have students complete the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" as a group project and then use the completed sheets as the basis for class discussion about the specific assignment, the use of the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" itself, and the writing process in general. It is essential to emphasize to students that the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" must be completed in <u>their words</u>; the "Worksheet" is designed to help students internalize all aspects of the assignment, the writing process, and provide practice in critical thinking skills.

Although the sections of the "Worksheet" are relatively self-explanatory, the sections "AUDIENCE," "INTENTION," "EVALUATIVE CRITERIA," and especially "AFTER PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES AND THINKING, WHAT ARE THE MAJOR IDEAS I WANT TO SHARE IN THIS PAPER?" are important to emphasize to students. Early discussion

about these with students can prevent many time-consuming and frustrating problems.

It is effective to share our "Writing As Learning Activity Worksheet" with students to show them the relationship between our perception of the assignment and how use of the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" helps insure that clear communication occurs. Similarly, our completion of a "Writing Assignment Worksheet" and sharing it with our students effectively reinforces our belief in the value of this activity.

Monitoring both actual student writing and the completion of the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" throughout the assignment and the course can aid significantly in our assessments of and suggestions for improving both individual and class writing difficulties.

The "Writing Assignment Worksheet" leads into the practice and use of the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" and oral "Praise-Question-Polish" response techniques by both us as instructors and by students as peer responders.

Use of the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" also helps reinforce the importance of editing skills as one of the last steps in the composing process.

To reinforce the importance of the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" concept and approach to writing improvement, students can be required to turn in completed worksheets with each final draft and be given some grade or credit for this.

Students should be encouraged to keep all completed writings and all completed "Worksheets." Thse become excellent sources of ideas for individual prewriting and revision activities and for aid in self-assessment of writing improvement and problems.

We should also encourage students to utilize the "Writing Assignment

Worksheet" for all major writing assignments in all courses to help reinforce the importance and value of this approach to to writing and thinking improvement.

The "Writing Assignment Worksheet" is not meant to be a cure-all for writing problems, and the "Worksheet" does require time and effort to utilize effectively. However, the "Writing Assignment Worksheet" can be one valuable to help students improve essential thinking and writing skills.

APPENDIX B

WRITING ASSIGNMENT WORKSHEET

This sheet is a suggested guide to help you with your major writing assignments. Write the "answers" in your own words or "think" them in your own words.

NAME: _____

SUBJECT: _____

PAPER DUE DATE: _____

ASSIGNMENT: (A) Formal assignment (what the teacher/textbook says):

(B) Assignment in my words:

(Double check my understanding of the assignment with the teacher)

AUDIENCE (To whom am I writing this?): _____

INTENTION (What do I want to accomplish in this paper?): _____

_____

LENGTH REQUIRED: _____

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA (How will my paper be graded?):

SPECIAL NOTES OR INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE PAPER:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION NEEDED?

WHAT?

WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

WHEN CAN I WORK ON THIS PAPER?

POSSIBLE PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES (A) Class activities:

(B) Own activities:

CAN I WORK WITH OTHERS ON THIS PAPER?

WHOM?

WHEN?

AFTER PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES AND THINKING, WHAT ARE THE MAJOR IDEAS I WANT TO SHARE IN THIS PAPER?

WRITING SELF-DIAGNOSIS/IMPROVEMENT (What writing skills do I want to work on in this paper?):

AFTER WRITING A DRAFT AND SEEKING RESPONSES FROM OTHERS (seek a wide range of oral "Praise-Question-Polish" responses and written "Reader Evaluation Sheet" responses):

WHAT DID THEY LIKE?

WHAT QUESTIONS DID THEY HAVE?

WHAT SUGGESTIONS DID THEY HAVE?

INSTRUCTOR RESPONSES AND SUGGESTIONS:

POSSIBLE REVISION ACTIVITIES/IDEAS:

AFTER WRITING A REVISED DRAFT AND SEEKING RESPONSES FROM OTHERS (again seek a wide range of oral and written responses):

WHAT DID THEY LIKE?

WHAT QUESTIONS DID THEY HAVE?

WHAT SUGGESTIONS DID THEY HAVE?

(Repeat for each revision until you are satisfied)

AS I PREPARED THE FINAL DRAFT FOR SHARING/EVALUATION, DID I EDIT AND PROOFREAD CAFEFULLY?

BEFORE SUBMISSION, DID I HAVE AT LEAST THREE (3) PEOPLE READ MY PAPER TO DOUBLE-CHECK FOR CORRECTNESS?

1.

2.

3.

GRADE/EVALUATION OF PAPER:

CAN IT BE REWRITTEN AND RESUBMITTED?

IDEAS FOR POSSIBLE REVISION:

SCHEDULE CONFERENCE WITH THE INSTRUCTOR:

FROM: James Upton, Burlington Community High School
SUB: The "Reader Evaluation Sheet:" "P-Q-P" on Paper

The "Reader Evaluation Sheet" is a written model of Bill Lyons' "Praise-Question-Polish" technique of writing response. Many times an instructor can not utilize the "Praise-Question-Polish" technique with every student, and the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" is one method of providing such response in lieu of the oral discussion.

Guidelines and suggestions for use of the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" follow, and I would encourage all instructors to explore additional methods of utilizing the "Sheet."

1. Basic Guidelines for Completion of the "Reader Evaluation Sheet:"

   a. The writer completes the top section of the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" with his/her name, title, audience, intention/purpose, draft number, and evaluative criteria. This information is essential for the reader in order for his/her responses to be most meaningful. Completion of these also helps to reinforce and clarify these requirements for the writer.

   b. The reader should carefully note the items explaining the nature of the assignment, discuss these with the writer if necessary, and then read the <u>entire</u> paper before making any responses to the paper.

   c. After reading the paper, the writer completes the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" <u>in order</u>.

d. Depending on the "Draft Number," sections II, III, and IV are ideally "optional;" however, the reader should make all comments and suggestions as specific and positive as possible. Section IV is to be completed only when a paper is near the final draft stage and then only when the items listed detract from the readability and credibility of the paper.

e. Section V is for any comments which do not "fit" into the other sections, and such comments usually deal with content, suggestions for further exploration, etc..

f. The only marks to be made on the paper itself are "smiling faces" or "++" beside those sections the reader believes are very effective or a "?" beside those sections the reader believes are not clear or are ineffective.

2. As with all acquired skills, students need effective introduction to and positive practice with the "Reader Evaluation Sheet," and introducing the "Sheet," explaining the guidelines, and providing actual group practice with the "Sheet" is an effective way to accomplish these goals. The use of previously completed student writings in various stages of completion is an excellent means to reinforce the uses and value of the "Reader Evaluation Sheet."

3. The "Reader Evaluation Sheet" can be utilized in a number of ways:

a. The "Sheet" provides a more "permanent" response to student works, and many students keep the "Sheet" as a reference as they work to improve their writing.

b. The instructor can complete the "Sheet" before a conference to make the conference more efficient.

c. The student can complete the sections of the "Sheet" in his/her

own words during a conference with the instructor.

d. The "Reader Evaluation Sheet" can be used to introduce a specific type or structure of writing by having students complete a "Sheet" about sample writings of the type/structure to be written and using the answers to the "Sheet" as an introduction/discussion of the type/structure of writing.

e. Students can be asked to complete a "Sheet" about their own specific work or body or works to help develop their own self-assessment skills.

f. The use of the "Reader Evaluation Sheet" is an excellent method of involving students in peer response as both writer and responder.

g. The "Reader Evaluation Sheet" is an excellent means for providing response from a writing center for language arts/writing classes and for providing "Context Based Response" for content area writing assignments.

The "Reader Evaluation Sheet" is not a substitute for the actual writing processes nor for the oral conferences about writing; hopefully, it is another effective method of adding to the ultimate quality of the writing.

READER EVALUATION SHEET

AUTHOR'S NAME:_____ TITLE OF PAPER:_____

AUDIENCE FOR PAPER:_____ INTENTION/PURPOSE:_____

DRAFT NUMBER:_____ EVALUATION CRITERIA (How will paper be graded?):_____

_____

READER'S NAME:_____ DATE:_____

I. What parts of my paper do you like? What parts are most effective?

What is the one best part of my paper?

II. What questions do you have about my paper? What parts are not clear?

III. What suggestions do you have to improve my revision of this paper?

IV. Please check the items which detract from the readability of my paper:

___mechanics ___word choice ___transitions ___sentence variety

___grammar ___spelling ___usage ___vivid/precise wording

V. Thank you for reading and responding to my paper. Please make any additional comments about my paper and my ideas on the back of this sheet. I hope to discuss my paper with you before I begin my next draft.